

**NEFFA Finances: Stable  
with YOUR Help!**

**Get Your Festival  
Tickets Now!**

**45 Pages of Minutes**  
Ye GODS! Make it STOP!!!

# NEFFA



# NEWS

Winter 2010 – Vol. XXXVI #4



**Who is this  
man????**

**Got Valuable  
NEFFA  
Memorabilia?**

## From the President, Robert Golder



Two years ago, I wrote the following words in the NEFFA News:

*“Oddly enough, as the recession deepens, I find more reason for optimism about NEFFA’s future.*

*Although our organization is impacted by the pressures and concerns of our times, we have an advantage because we exercise the New England traditions that the Festival has always celebrated. Those traditions include a realistic but essentially positive outlook on life, and a reliance on community-building through volunteer activity and support.”*

It turns out that I was right to be optimistic. NEFFA’s future is brighter. Although the treasury is not as big as it used to be, NEFFA essentially broke even in 2009, and was a few thousand dollars in the black in 2010. NEFFA is not rich, but due to your ongoing support our organization currently is financially stable. A lot of credit is also due to the Board, which worked to reduce costs wherever cuts would not sacrifice the joys of the Festival. As a result, NEFFA is now in the midst of planning a great 67th Annual Festival scheduled for April 15-17, 2011.

When an organization is stressed, its leadership may be tempted to create a sense of fear, to scare its members into making larger donations. But that’s not the NEFFA way. Your Board knows that for NEFFA to be truly successful, we must rely upon members’ hope, optimism, and positive energy to develop the creativity and ingenuity needed to move our community forward.

So the Board conveyed to you an urgent but positive and factual message that explained what was needed if NEFFA was to continue as a joyful and robust arts organization. We laid out the specific facts

(Continued on page 2)

## Advance Ticketing Returns for 2011 Festival

NEFFA's inaugural run with advance ticketing for the 2010 Festival was a success, resulting in 10% of Festival admissions purchased by phone or web in this first year. Post-purchase survey results included strong support for continuing this purchase option going forward, and 100% of respondents indicated they would recommend advance purchase to others. Building off that initial success, we are pleased to offer advance Festival ticketing again in 2011. We continue to partner with BrownPaperTickets.com as our ticket agent. Change highlights for 2011 include:

- Elimination of service fees for advance purchase (no additional cost over "at Festival" ticket purchases)
- Simplified offering (fewer ticket types/pricing levels)
- All tickets will be will-call (no physical tickets to lose, simplified Festival check-in)
- A discount code must be given to access member pricing.

As a member, you will have access to ticket pricing averaging 15% off. *The member discount code for 2011 is "TRADITION" - please retain this for your later use.*

Advance ticketing will open in early 2011. Further information will appear at <http://neffa.org/ticketing> at that time. Questions? Email [advancetix@neffa.org](mailto:advancetix@neffa.org) or leave a message at (617) 299-1590.

-- Don Veino

(Continued from page 1)

about budget concerns and volunteer needs. You responded, and you continue to respond! Your ongoing support makes it possible for NEFFA to continue its mission to preserve folk traditions in New England, and to encourage the development of a living folk culture. I want to make sure you know that you're making good things happen.

In these troubled economic times, the Board will continue to keep a close eye on NEFFA's needs, even as we look to make the Festival ever more enjoyable. When costs rise or we face new challenges, we'll give you specific information, and ask for your assistance. When we save money and achieve new successes, we'll tell you about that too. It's the NEFFA way.

At a recent Board meeting, Harold Henry described NEFFA as "a level-funded, volunteer-driven organization." Those few words say a lot about this group. By "level-funded," Harold meant that we don't set Festival ticket prices to wring the most money from every attendee. From long experience, we have a good idea of what it will cost to host an incredibly fun weekend, and between tickets, memberships, and your additional financial gifts we seek to cover those costs and make the Festival a compelling, creative, and exciting event.

But the real vitality comes from the phrase "volunteer-driven." All the performers who create moments of joy, and all the planners and workers who take care of logistics and arrangements, are volunteers. We are active participants who literally shape the Festival into a grand celebration of arts and culture.

Beyond volunteerism and donations, there are some extremely important ways that you can participate in this process of building the NEFFA community. The 2011 Festival is an ideal event to invite your friends who are new to folk music and dance. As your guests enjoy the Festival, please encourage them to become NEFFA Members. You are probably a NEFFA member already, but don't let your membership lapse! Your continued membership in NEFFA is a vital part of supporting the joyful activities and community that we all cherish.

As the weekend draws near, please visit [www.neffa.org](http://www.neffa.org) often for the latest updates on planning for the 67th Annual Festival on April 15-17, 2011. As always, thank you for helping NEFFA to create joyful celebrations of music, dance, song, storytelling, arts, and crafts for the New England folk community.

## THE FESTIVAL ACTIVITY ROOM WILL BUSTLE WITH ....

The NEFFA activity room has played a large role for many families and their NEFFA experiences. This room provides a space for families to gather and take part in the many activities that support and remind us of the folk culture. We are all grateful for the years of hard work and dedication Linda Palstrom and Jenny Mosely committed to NEFFA. This year, the activity room has a new chair who is excited to seek the assistance of an on-site coordinator. If interested or seeking additional information, please contact me, Ashley Zanca, at [activityroom@neffa.org](mailto:activityroom@neffa.org)



### Tom Kruskal — All-around Good Guy. Now, an Award Winner

The Country Dance and Song Society has awarded a Lifetime Contribution Award to morris musician and teacher **Tom Kruskal**. An award party/dance will be held on Saturday, April 2, 2011 at Nevins Hall in Framingham, MA. The hall opens at 4:30 pm, potluck tapas at 5 pm, award presentation at 6:30, followed by English country and contra dancing. Suggested donation is \$5. Karen Axelrod, and Deborah Kruskal (Tom's wife) are handling the details. Look for updates on [www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org) as the time nears, or, if you're a Facebook user, there's a FB site, "Celebrate Tom!"



Editor: **Dan Pearl**      Mailing: **Dayle Watts**  
Editorial Review: **Robert Golder, Shelagh Ellman-Pearl,**  
**Lisa Greenleaf, Maureen Carey**

The NEFFA News, a publication of the New England Folk Festival Association, Inc., is published four times a year to communicate with its membership and other interested persons. **Please send all editorial submissions** to Dan Pearl, 15 Buffalo Run, Southborough, MA 01772, or to [neffa\\_news@neffa.org](mailto:neffa_news@neffa.org). Opinions of individuals are not necessarily the opinion of the NEFFA Executive Board.

**Publicize your events!** Display advertising is available for qualifying folk-related organizations. For more information, contact the editor. Copyright © 2011 by the New England Folk Festival Association, Inc.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Spring	Feb. 1
Summer	May 15
Fall	Aug. 15
Winter	Nov. 1

# The Great NEFFA Archive Scavenger Hunt



I picked up the Archives when we moved out of the Melrose office and have been wandering through them. After reading and poking and prepping some things to go to UNH, I decided I needed more work. More work means more materials and so it is with great pleasure that I announce the NEFFA Archive Scavenger Hunt:

**Cleaning up and looking for burnables for the old wood stove? Don't throw these away – send them to NEFFA, P.O. Box 2789, Acton MA 01720 by March 1, 2011, and automatically enter the Hunt and possibly win a mystery prize and a citation in the next NEFFA News.**

## Eligible items:

**Old Festival badges. Rectangular, square, circular, triangular, diamond, whatever – we have had them all.**

**The 1944 Festival flyer.**

**Any information about the 20th (1964) and 25th (1969) Anniversary Festivals, especially Brochures.**

**Board of Director documents from early 1960's and mid 1970's.**

**Anything to do with the WGBH taping of the 1970 Festival.**

**Weird committee names and notes, e.g. "The Committee for a Happier Festival". Did you know that there is an existing committee called "Arrangements" and it has nothing to do with flowers?**

**Anything at all to do with the 1948 Festival.**

**Pictures, but with the year, place and major subjects identified if at all possible.**

**Were you on a NEFFA committee and had leftovers? (documents, no food please)**

**Ineligible items. Some things we have more than enough of so DON'T send the following:**

**Festival grids**

**Festival programs**

**Festival flyers (except 1944)**

**Thank you and good luck,**

**Terry Huffaker  
Archive Committee Chair**

**Fine print: Materials will not be returned. The decision of the Judge is final.**

## DANCE ORGANIZER'S CONFERENCE

Announcing!! A conference especially for **dance organizers** in the Northeast! Mark your calendars for November 11-13, 2011 --- in the Norwich VT/ Hanover NH area.

We hope you share our excitement about this rare opportunity. Seldom is there such support for dance administrators, and yet, the people out there putting on the dances are sustaining our social dance traditions. (Thanks to organizers, the rest of us have a venue to call/play/dance!)

That's why, with support from the Country Dance & Song Society, we are planning this weekend --- for organizers of contra/square, community/family and other traditional English and American dances to meet one another, share ideas and experiences, learn new skills and strategies for successful dances, and more. We'll also dance, eat, and **have fun** with our organizer peers! Happy New Year to all, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Chrissy Fowler, Belfast, ME

(Belfast Flying Shoes Dance Series)

Delia Clark, Taftsville, VT

(Woodstock Community Contra Dance)

Linda Henry, Amherst, MA

(Amherst Community Contra Dance)

-- *Chrissy Fowler*, Ktaadn\_me@hotmail.com

The Grants Committee is happy that, with the improvement in NEFFA's finances, we are again able to review more positively Grant Applications. If you have been holding off, let us hear from you.

**Information:**

[www.neffa.org/grants.html](http://www.neffa.org/grants.html)

-- Robert Johnson

# Summaries of the Minutes of the NEFFA Executive Board

June 12, 2010

## President's Report

Bob Golder: I was thrilled. I think it was the year people stopped thinking about Natick. They are no longer comparing. Dan Pearl: I agree, based on evaluations. They no longer have as many "Natick" complaints. Linda Leslie: I agree, fewer "I was lost" questions about signs, etc. New folks do not have a comparison. Don Veino: there are explicit "Mansfield feels like NEFFA now" comments. These positions need filling: Legal Advisor, Parking Chair, and Activity Room Chair. Grants Writing committee is needed (I might be willing next year.)

## Treasurer

Ralph Jones: Online ticket sales were \$7300 roughly. Total income was up \$5000 from last year thanks to ads and performer donations. Performer donations were \$5500. We appear to be +\$11,000 for the Festival this year.

## Tickets

Don Veino: Advance sales allowed us to take credit and debit cards for the first time. The ordering choices were very complicated. Nonetheless, we sold 152 tickets. Only 6 were sold by phone, this could have been promoted more. Total fees paid were just under \$400.

65% of evaluation responders said they were aware of the online sales. "Would you use this again?" 143 answers: 8% no, 92% yes. The biggest attractor was credit cards, quicker check in. Lack of refund was a small concern.

My own survey: "Would you recommend to others?" 100% yes. "How did you hear about it?" 88% said web site, but at least one from all sources. Check-in ease was well rated. There were some issues about where to go. Need better signs for pre-paid tickets.

I got several complaints about the paper badges being flimsy. I think we should continue doing this. We got to almost 10% of overall ticket sales very quickly with very little promotion. I would recommend eliminating the fees for next year.

I think we should simplify our Festival pricing. We can issue discount codes for membership discount. Bob: you had 100% satisfaction! This is amazing. We can do all sorts of things, but when everyone is satisfied I think the effort/result ratio needs to be considered so that you can enjoy the Festival as well as making it happen. I agree we should talk about streamlining pricing and absorbing fees.

Beth Parkes: Attendance was about the same as last year.

## Sound

There were fewer complaints than previous years. We are under budget, though up from last year. We inserted house sound operators which helped to address contra dance intelligibility issues. It especially helped with medleys. There are procedural changes we can still make.

Decision for 2011, Passover/Easter year has some inherent challenges. Should we bid or not? There was a bad sound issue with Swallowtail, especially affecting the caller. We added

wireless communication from stage to engineer. It was not as effective as I hoped.

The new orientation in the Middle School gym worked. There were some flaws in the speaker placement that can be addressed. Wireless headset mics seemed to not meet all needs.

Large fans worked well. Pedestal fans were also used. Fill speaker near any fans helped. High school sound appeared to work well. A few issues, but overall good.

Volunteer sound: went well, due to Bethany Seeger's work. High School Auditorium system is labor intensive.

Linda: sound is such an essential piece. Michael Bergman stepped in and did a great job. For Michael it was a matter of "work with the people you know" and he did a magnificent job. He was very careful to let people know what his limits were and is taking responsibility. I absolutely enjoy working with Mike. He responds, he tells it like it is, he takes people needs into consideration.

[Michael walks in!] Bob: we have been talking about how worried I was before you said you would do it. And what a fabulous job you did.

Michael: my biggest concern is the question of bidding and the date change and difficult setup. All members of the sound committee have been fabulous. Bethany Seeger will not be doing sound volunteers next year. A replacement needs to have some very specific skills.

## Program

Linda Leslie: Generally the major issues are all happy ones: intro dance room has been wildly popular. Most sessions were very full and not inviting because of it. We need to re think about using High School stage for more dancing. Room 125 is not large enough and is an awkward shape.

Folk Music & Song performers do not want to be on the stage, so we are wasting good wood floor space. We could swap out 125 and FM&S. Don: They have the same space issue at Flurry. Having all the same room meant people never left the beginner room. Linda: we want people to find the beginner space.

Michael: we have had very little use of the stage with chairs on stage, but we could push them into it. Linda: the real question is "is it the best use of the space?"

Folks were happy with the program this year. Sure, there were specific comments, but this was a good year. It is always a question about what gets scheduled opposite the medley.

Dan: Should we consider increasing the dance percentage of each hour by having longer slots before a band change? Linda: We have been scheduling sessions with dual sessions with same band. We have this push/pull between contra in high school gym vs. creating a huge separation between contra dancers and everyone else. We have thought about this and we would like there to not be too much emphasis given to the contra dancers.

Dan: especially because we have a lot of overhead getting between buildings, we should consider churn. Linda: the international dance chair is concerned. Bob: the charter of the organization is to encourage people experiencing different things. It troubles me to segregate spaces so that people will only do contra dance and nothing else, or only a certain type of music and nothing else. How much do we go with what people like versus the history of our organization?

Linda: I would like to have a NEFFA history room. Now that Terry has gone through the archives and has a lot of material and many people don't know the history, we need some emphasis. It would require setup but no maintenance.

## Printed Materials

Bob: We printed 3000 program guides and recycled 1200. Grids: we printed 3000 small, 1000 large. 85 large were left, small 1000. The people have spoken. And the print should be bigger in the program guide. The stock was flimsy, the book too large to carry, and it was hard to read.

Dan, Seth, Will, technical committee, we are working on streamlining the workload of the program book, application, etc. Finances: \$1578, much less than last year. Good ad revenue, greater than cost. A lot of one time work will be able to be used again in the future. Bob: we used to spend money on the program book, but now it actually makes money. Sure there were problems, but it was better. Dan: we should put the PDF on the web site so anyone who wants an archival copy can print one. Don: we may need to ask ourselves about how we retain information for the future.

## Crafts

Ann Schunior: We had a lot of new people, high caliber and professional people. This is a transition that has been going on for a number of years. Much more experience with more professional booths. Our spaces are also now 10x10 which is standard.

An issue with a person with a canopy and the fire department was worked out well.

The sound in the craft room issue: particularly the bones, and didgeridoos and drums. We instituted a rule that there is three year tenure and that they fit in well and the sound is not overwhelming. We were able to fix all the sound problems this year.

The only real problem we had was one particular "artist." The application looked all right. She set up and I said to myself "these are commercially made" she insisted that her family was doing everything. She was wonderful, but our concerns were always put off. I'm sure she was not being honest with us. If she had presented it as what it is, she could have been a fantastic addition to the folk bazaar.

Don: Was it successful for the vendors? Ann: Yes. One fiddle maker sold two fiddles (amazing for an instrument maker.) I got emails from several people that it felt slow but the numbers were actually good. The vendors were pretty happy.

## Performer Sales

Quantities of items submitted were down, but more of them sold so dollar amounts were up. We did great on Sunday, when the weather was a little less nice. 137 2010 shirts, 34 previous years' shirts. A lot more badge holders than in the past.

Performers didn't do their sheets in advance, probably because they did not receive them in paper. We want to limit the number of items that performers bring. We want to be sure that they are items actually done by the performers themselves.

A lot of the performers are selling directly. One performer said "then people don't have to pay the tax." Beth Parkes: this is an issue about blocking areas after the performers. Nancy Hanssen: one of most popular performers who told me this sells both in

places. Linda: as long as this is not a safety issue or a space problem this is not probably a concern. Nancy: a lot of the newer people like it a lot. If the trend continues down, we may need to reconsider the table at all. Bob: the performer sales table helps us keep on schedule and helps us run the Festival. It works for us in every way.

Nancy: we love being in the crafts room. And the new space is great! We need more committee members. People who are responsible and can make a commitment.

Top Sellers: Perpetual E-motion, Bruce Segan Northland CD, Bob McQuillen, Larry Unger, Sol Weber, Evy Meyer, David Millstone

## Folk Bazaar

Angie Taylor: We had no problems. There was one complaint about fewer booths. None of my people said they hadn't done as well as in the past. Some people want to know which booths are in which buildings. Shelagh: A map is made for hospitality and it could be added to the program guide and perhaps on the wall. (On the walls so that they can be the most up to date in case of changes.) Jane Breede: we could do a simple diagram of who is where.

Angie: we cannot expand much more. Booths are put in a particular place because they fit.

## Parking

Bob: Will Mentor's report. Will is writing extensive directions for a new chair. The small east lot was not used Saturday. Sunday we did use this. Leslie College was not there, so we had more space behind the building. Crafts vendors showed up without permits. Don: the parking passes don't get checked once we park, right? So we could just use a list? Ann: Will started checking earlier so it overlapped when the crafts people were coming in. I had great parking managers and volunteers.

## Evaluations

Shelagh: It went well. We had paper and online. All paper evaluations were uploaded so we had electronic totals for everything. Numbers: 247 online, 165 paper. I found most of the people are full Festival attendees. Most are from New England. Learn about the Festival Word of Mouth but quite a few Facebook. Mostly non-members submit (matching our general attendance). There were benefits to using Google docs for input. Don: the format in which it was captured was problematic. Linda: it is light-years better than what we have had in the past. Shelagh: it may be that we move from some questions. Don: I am happy to have the data, and I can work with it. Don: we could put a data entry station at the Festival. Linda: I would like to capture more people who are not there all weekend. A data entry station might help with that.

## Inside Facilities

Mansfield schools see us as a plus. Same discounts as last year from schools. Bob LaConte tentatively agreed to next year's altered dates but needed to check with drama group about potential conflict. Setup was more chaotic than usual. The same four people who could lift items did much work. Evaluations were mostly positive. No major facilities issues. I need to work out how to attend more sessions. Fans are an ongoing issue. Some got redirected or turned off.

Canopies for morris and outside eating area worked well. I enjoyed working at the Meet the Board table. Strike was good. Dan helped a great deal. Better task sheets are needed. We need dance hall take down notes.

**Shuttle Bus:**

Dan: The new bus company did a fine job. Once they got an education about what our Festival was about they improved from a shaky start.

BTW: The cell phones didn't seem to work this year. I don't know what the solution is.

**Wrap-up**

Linda: A couple of observations: One advertiser put up flyers on all the bathrooms. Bob will send a letter. We also had a young person in the cafeteria without shoes. One of the booth people took care of it. We need to think about how we handle "situations"

Timing of volunteers was discussed. Bob: This year a strong retreat topic will be volunteers, sound, etc in this short setup year. Let's make it low stress, high results.

**September 19, 2010**

**Approval of 2010-2011 Committee Chairs (Bob Golder)**

Bob is working to finalize Committee chairs. Status of appointments to date:

**General Committees**

Archives	Terry Huffaker
Family Dance	Jacob Bloom
Finance & Review	Harold Henry
Grants	Robert Johnson
Membership	Beth Parkes
NEFFA News	Dan Pearl
Publicity	Bill Cowie
TNDC	Dan Pearl
Benefit Bash	(Open)
Legal Advisor	(Open)

**Festival Committees**

Programming	Linda Leslie
Access	Shelagh Ellman-Pearl
Badges	Jean Schwartz
Early Entry	Dick George
Operations	Dan Pearl
Outside Facilities	Dan Pearl
Crafts	Ann Schunior and Raylinda Wood
Evaluations	Shelagh Ellman-Pearl
Folk Bazaar	Angela Taylor, Jane Breede
Food	Maureen Carey
Information	Terry Huffaker
Instrument Check	Alex Krogh-Grabbe
Lost and Found	Dan Pearl
Parking	Dena Brody (Co-chair), looking for a co-chair
Performer Sales	Nancy Hanssen
Printed Materials	Linda Leslie, Frank Kreimendahl
Safety	Alan Finkelstein
Sound	Michael Bergman
Tickets (Festival)	Caroline Bays
Tickets (Advance)	Don Veino
T-Shirts	Lisa Greenleaf
Volunteers	Bill Cowie
Children's Activity Room	(Open)

Linda Leslie reported that Andrew Grover resigned from the

Nominations Committee. She asked the Board to suggest candidates to fill the opening. Bob noted that Andrew was from Rhode Island and would like to find someone located outside of greater Boston to broaden geographical reach. The slate was approved by the elected Board.

**Grants Committee Reauthorization**

Bob authorized the members of the Grants committee: Robert Johnson, Bill Cronin, Lisa Greenleaf, Tony Parkes and Judith Schrier The President will ask Robert Johnson for a report on committee activity.

**Program**

Linda Leslie reported that applications are currently being received, with a good number of applications from new performers. The application deadline is October 6. The Board discussed the logistics of the Friday schedule and the affect of the school schedule that limits pre-Festival set-up. Harold Henry has discussed with school officials the availability of facilities on Friday. Harold reported that food-preparation facilities (stoves and refrigerators) that have been used by the Cafeteria food vendors in the past have been removed from the school. The stoves and refrigerators in the Bistro room (High School) have also been removed.

Harold reported that Lesley College will not be using the schools the same week as the Festival this year. The consensus of the Board is to work toward a full Friday program schedule.

Linda reported that the new on-line performer application process is working well. She thanked Dan Pearl for his efforts in developing this.

Linda reported that a caller has proposed a square-dance medley for the Festival.

Linda noted that the popularity of the introductory dance sessions has made some sessions feel crowded. She would like to add sessions, and perhaps change the length of the sessions to 90 minutes. She will work with Harold to find additional space.

**Printed Materials**

Dan Pearl reported that the printer of the 2010 Festival Guide has gone out of business. Several replacements were suggested.

**Volunteers**

Bob Golder announced that Julia Nickles has agreed to join the Volunteer committee. Bill Cowie reported that Bethany Seeger may not be available this year. Bill also reported that Susan Crocker did much of the pre-Festival work last year, as well as managing the Volunteer Table for the entire Festival.

**Crafts**

Ann Schunior reported that fewer Craft vendors have applied so far, perhaps due to the uncertainty about the length of the Friday session. Those who are returning are aware of the changes to pre-Festival set-up logistics. Additional logistics issues were discussed.

**Tickets – Advanced Sales**

Don Veino would like to simplify the ticket price structure in order to better fit the on-line ticket vendor's capabilities.



Don suggested that the Board resolve a prior discussion that considered starting advanced ticket sales at an earlier date, with a discount for early purchase.

Bob Golder noted Bethany Seeger's report that the pricing schedule does not give people an incentive to volunteer on Friday.

Don said that the ticket vendor can offer discount codes to accommodate the variations of Festival ticket prices.

Don also noted that a single Saturday session would be simpler for the vendor system.

Other issues include advanced fulfillment and express ticketing, and whether the nametag should be replaced by something else, such as a wrist-band.

Bob Golder appointed an ad-hoc committee to consider these issues and report back to the Board with recommendations at the October meeting. Committee members: Don Veino, David Casserly, Harold Henry, Bob Golder, Julia Nickles, Ashley Zanca. Bob will ask Beth Parkes, Maureen Carey and Caroline Bays to join the committee or provide input.

### **Information/Hospitality**

Terry Huffaker would like to staff an Information Table in the High School for the full Festival, which would require a significant increase in the number of volunteers needed, both for the Tables and for additional supervisors.

Dan Pearl felt that the Volunteers could help with operational issues.

Shelagh Ellman-Pearl observed that knowledgeable volunteers are needed, and encouraged Board members to make themselves available to help during the Festival.

Terry said that the lack of cell-phone reception made communications difficult.

Bill Cowie noted that the Festival generally does not have enough volunteers to staff all positions, and this may draw Volunteers away from other needs.

### **Thursday Night Dance**

Dan Pearl reported that the November 4, 2010 dance will move to Cambridge due to floor refinishing at the Scout House.

In the absence of a Legal Advisor, Dan will handle any communications needed with the insurance agent.

Dan reported that a celebration of the 1000<sup>th</sup> Thursday Night dance will occur on November 11.

### **Food**

Bob Golder contacted a Mansfield-based Asian food vendor gauge their interest in becoming a food vendor at the Festival. Bob will also attempt to attend an upcoming Chamber of Commerce event with many local food vendors. Shelagh asked Bob to publicize the date of this event to the Board.

### **Other Business**

Ralph Jones reported that he gave CDS-Boston electronic copies of past financial statements and records for emergency backup. The Board discussed the need for archiving meeting minutes and financial records.

Dan Pearl noted that expurgated versions of Board meeting minutes are published in the NEFFA News, which is archived on the NEFFA web site.

Terry Huffaker reported that she has converted many years of meeting minutes to electronic format for archive.

Harold Henry suggested that the Board make a decision about what to do with the Festival Quilt.

Harold suggested that the Board suggest targeting craft-type people, perhaps with a special ticket price for crafts only.

Harold suggested that NEFFA consider the creation of web applications tailored for mobile devices.

The Board discussed budget submissions for 2011. Dan Pearl suggested that the Treasurer compile a list of prior-year expenditures for each committee, and ask each chair to approve or revise as needed.

## **October 31, 2010**

Bob Golder: I've made 3 visits to Mansfield working to make things happen. We've been working on room allocation at the school. The 1000th Thursday dance was a great celebration.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

The IRS Form 990 is due 12/5. It is done and signed by Bob. We also must file with New Hampshire and it turns out that as far as New Hampshire's Secretary of State is concerned, we have been inactive since 1990. I called them and they will send a form to fill out. They need a registered agent who lives in New Hampshire. The current person is Charlotte Hastings. I see no reason to make a change. Dan: I think we could find a better representative. We have Ralph Page people available. Is Honey Hastings a member? Beth: no. Ralph: I send a tax return to them every year and they do communicate. Bob: I will send an email to a potential replacement.

Don: Should we have something on our calendar that reminds us about checking some of these things? "Verify that the following are updated." Bob: I have a timeline that Shelagh put together about requirements like this. For instance one of them was "make sure you have stationery" but now this would be more along the lines of what communication methods are used. Dan: I would recommend you make a presidential timeline that we could all see but only the President would be able to update. And that ownership would pass with the presidency. Don: Google has the ability to have a NEFFA branded version of Google that includes calendar, email, etc. This enables passing the whole thing along with the organization. Harold: since we use Yahoo would that be comparable? Don: not really. We could have something attached to neffa.org that we could work with. Ralph: What is the calendar on NEFFA.org right now? Dan: that's a Yahoo calendar. Harold: We need two different calendars. Don: This is different because with Yahoo, it is really controlled by the creator. If you have an organizational Google account it can be passed along. Dan: what is the difference? Don: I'm not sure what reason we have for not pursuing the Google solution. Harold: We can create an account for NEFFA and then we can delegate rights to others. Don: My point is that we are doing this by happenstance and not design. We can turn this into something more designed and controllable. Linda: Historically, we had timelines for each job that were shared. When this was shared we didn't lose track of things that were relevant for everyone. Nobody is really doing that anymore so we are losing some of that information. I think Don is offering

us the chance to do that again. Linda: Yahoo docs are not organized by date. Harold; so this is an analysis of where we want to go for Neffa.org. "Let's move to that place for now..." It's not like we are stuck on Yahoo. Don: I'd love it if it was just through neffa.org. Linda: would you work with us, Don? Don: yes but I don't want to run another committee

## Advance Ticketing

The committee met twice. We considered the factors. We looked back at NEFFA's history. We generated a model which forecasts revenue and worked correctly with the 2010 numbers. We agreed on a revenue-neutral plan for 2011. Our summary was to continue using Brown Paper Tickets, but to have NEFFA absorb the fees, but no advance sale discount. This would be reevaluated next year. Ralph: what are the fees we are absorbing? Don: \$.99 - \$1.99

Linda: a couple of things pop out at me. 1) Friday night we have still not taken into account the volunteer issues. 2) It is fascinating that some amounts went down from last year and the young people numbers all went up, some significantly. So that is a bit of a concern for me. Somehow or other we are shifting the burden down in order to have fewer bands. Don: to address your second point first: teens went down, child went up. Linda: I was trying to make an assumption about who are members. I believe the majority are adult over 25. Don: Member sales last year were 3% teen, 8% child and the rest adult/senior/young adult. Linda: I'm still concerned about increase in child price. Don: nonmember: 6% teen, 5% child. Even lower (2%) for percent of dollar volume. We can move this around if we wish. Linda: I'm going back to the Flurry model, their philosophy is senior/youth/members all get the same price. This is an interesting approach. I don't want families to not want to come. If people are looking at these numbers they will be aware of the change for young children.

Robert: One of the objectives of the committee was to reduce the number of categories. If you are going to combine categories, one is going to go up and one is going to go down. That is what happened. The youngest two groups one went up one went down. The young adult & seniors, as well. This can be avoided by not combining them, but if we are trying to reduce them you are going to have changes. Beth: members would have a big increase. Don: seniors were 30% of the member sales. Ralph: can we tell seniors/youth from each other? Don: it's really about how far we want to dice this. One of the key points is we are giving people bands for price benefits not for status. We could just have a category called "limited means" we could do it. There are infinite possibilities. Our proposal offers some simplification, while paying attention to the sources of our revenue. There are certainly other valid approaches.

Bill: clearly some good work has been done. If we take off our board hat and put on our attendee hat, if I am a family with four kids what's going to happen? If I am a senior what is going to happen? I know that the tool is supposed to simplify things, but maybe we need a better tool. Don: the reason to pursue this is simplification. Bill: but that must be subordinate to need. Don: that's Robert's point, we are taking away custom pricing for some groups, so someone will have concerns.

Don: I did take a look a "what is a family?" What is it? I looked at a few samples: Single parent child under 4, no change. Two parents, 1 8yr, 1 14 would go up \$3. Family 2 teen, actually

goes down. We can dial down the youth price and it won't hurt much because they are a small number. Bill we could also adjust the age range.

Dan: for a while I was thinking about the age range issue. Preschooler rate free has been sacrosanct. We could call this the concept of "drag-alongs"; maybe we could extend the free range. This is an investment in the future that will benefit us in the long run, perhaps, if they like it. Maybe we could increase this up to around 12 or so. Maybe only charge teens. Young adults are serious and are only there because they want to be there. That is where I see the classifications. We do not want to keep the adults away because they can't afford it. Bob: From my experience with Buttonwood Zoo setting admission prices, there we were concerned about the dumping ground issue. This is parents who would drop off children because it is free.

Don: The committee was fairly large and quite representative. We discussed for over an hour lots of possibilities and options. Many of the points brought up here were discussed. We came to the consensus that this was the best proposal. This proposal is revenue neutral. Obviously this was a subcommittee and not the full board, but we did put together a good proposal.

Harold: We found something that reduced complexity, that was revenue neutral, balanced the load as much as possible and I think we should move forward. Robert: there wasn't anyone on the committee who got everything they wanted. Bill: did Carolyn approve the non \$5 numbers? Robert: Yes, definitely. Linda: I would like to see what Dan has suggested (increasing the "free" range for children) and I would like to increase senior to 65 instead of 60. Ralph: is child with parent or not? Bob: I am against the increase of drag-alongs. I want to signal to the parent that you are giving a child something of value. This is something to enrich their child's life. This is signaling that this is something beautiful being given to your child. This is not about money, but that they understand that this has value. Bill: I wish we knew how many families with three kids are price sensitive. Harold: Most families leave at 6:00. Nancy: can we not refer to "parent" but adult? Harold: guardian? Nancy: There are a variety of adults with children. Linda: programming quite consciously programs family programming on Saturday morning. Harold: as an educator I could see raising the drag-along to 8 or 9 but not to 12. If the kid is 6 the parent will not leave them alone. At 8 or 9 they are left on their own. NEFFA does invest resources to support those kids and should be receiving something for it. You could stretch the 6 up a bit, but not a lot.

Linda: Friday night's price says there is no advantage to volunteering on Friday night. Per hour price is \$4 as opposed to the rest of the Festival. I don't know if that affects attendance, but it does affect our volunteer corp. Don: 7% of our tickets were Friday only, this is 32% total when factoring in all Festival. Bethany and I have been in communication. We give them greater value for their work by either raising prices for Friday or overall prices. Perhaps we could offer Friday night volunteers the option to choose a later session. The real problem is that Friday is an inconvenient time to volunteer. Ralph: can you remind us what the volunteers get? Bill: one hour on Friday, if you work 3 on Saturday you get all Saturday, the policy has been the day you work is the day you get the pass. The issue is what would someone do if they take their pass for the next day? I would like Susan and Bethany to chime in. Linda: a volunteer



who volunteers on Friday gets no benefit in full Festival price. Don: we promised to make the problem no worse. Bob: this Friday is special, we get in late. Do we have an extra reliance on volunteers this year? Bill: there is a huge difference between pre-Festival and during Festival jobs. People really like pre-Festival jobs. There is huge demand for these. So there will not be a problem with pre-Festival. Don: we need to have robust volunteers for setup. Dan: we could give people a reward like a Festival tee shirt for free for working Friday. Don: I've had a similar thought perhaps a ticket for the quilt raffle. Harold: a certain number of volunteer designed tees to indicate your public contribution? What kind of incentive would bring these folks in? Bill: we have never had a severe shortage. We have cut back on some positions on Fridays.

Bob: I think we are building on last years' experience. I may have made more emphasis on the 14% rate than I should have. Linda: we had some issues with discounted advance sales, but this is a good answer. Don: we will have better data for next year as well. Dan: Not offering refunds is a source of bad will. This is a bomb ready to go off. This is not the NEFFA way. The NEFFA way would be to, of course refund the money. Don: we can offer refunds. This would be a cost we would bear. Right now within 12 hours you can just ask. We can set up a process beyond that. I agree with the values. The other festivals all have a no refund policy; this is because refunds are rather hard to do. Advantages: overall sales to support NEFFA's mission. We can't run solely with volunteers. Our customers have asked for it. It is consistent with other NEFFA offerings. It creates a commitment by the purchaser, this supports our mission. It allows credit card transactions. It lessons our ticket volunteer needs. We do have a limited resource; we just don't call it such. In the future it could help us know what to expect. Bill: we have two issues that we may be mixing; advance tickets vs. refunds. I think we need to do refunds. If it becomes a problem we could revisit it. Robert: I would be in favor of trying refunds at least this year. I don't think it would have a big impact, but if it does we can review it for next year. Bob: we would have to see what the mechanism is. Harold: saying we will refund is one thing, but then we need a system that will limit administrative overhead. Linda: and there are humans who have to do that. Ralph: if we start giving refunds we really cannot change this in the future. Nancy: did we get complaints? Don: not one. And I did a direct follow-up survey that gave people an opportunity to do so. Dan: but one person who is upset can destroy good will by repeating their story over and over again. Bill: the bad will is caused by the policy. Harold: so I just don't bother to get it. It's not an automatic thing, they have to request. Bob: can you explore a mechanism? Don: I would like someone who has passion for this to work on this with me. Dan: I could do this. It is all of the people coming together to create this Festival. If this makes our Festival different from the Flurry, so much the better. Bob: this is an example borne out by the jars on the performer check in table; donations of thousands of dollars.

## Sound

Bob: from Michael Bergman wanted to share that Peter has no contractor bidding this year. Erik will work with Bob Mills and Tony Hernandez. We have discussed the middle school gym issues. Ralph: it sounds like he is on track to meet schedule this year. Don: does no bid imply pricing that is the same as last

year. Bob: I would look 0-5% increase at most. Ralph: I got a very different impression. I was under the impression that we should expect an increase due to short setup. Dan: "more people" means "more money". Bob: I will get more specifics from Michael.

## Food

Bob: Harold and I on a trip confirmed that some of the spaces for food prep are no longer there. The school has done away with home economics. The Bistro area no longer has stoves or refrigerators. The Qualters home-ec room is completely stripped. This is now a music room. Everybody has been notified that we will be dealing with change. Everyone is working with Maureen. Dan: Maureen, in an email, said something about a non-handicapped area? Bob: this is what we called the "cafeteria overflow" room, past the LCFD booth down about 3 stairs, in a side room. The school didn't want us to use it in the past but they are now recommending it for anything that would not require handicapped access. Harold: the room is a fairly big room but has a big partition which is not easily moved. It could be used for cafeteria overflow should weather force us inside. We looked at it for possible dance, but the partitioning made that not doable.

## Publicity

Bill: Given limited resources, we are focusing on coffee houses and dances and still making yet another attempt to reach out to non-contra crowd. We are not going to focus on local community newspapers. Certainly in the local Mansfield area we will be reaching out to contacts. The local radio station did some wonderful things. We are focused on high value items. Beth: What about youth/college? I thought there was an attempt last year to reach out to colleges. Bill: I think that never came off last year, but I will follow up again. Beth: General marketing wisdom is that it takes 3-5 communications before you can make a connection. Don: do we have any way to know what is effective? Bill: mostly we have gotten information from dancers. One of the radio stations said to us "I can't imagine that any dancer doesn't know about NEFFA, but some of your song folks might not."

## Facilities

Harold: We visited school, got a warm reception from custodians. There is one room across from 125 for beginner dance that looks good. We saw the kitchen issue, but there is a possibility to use the kitchens used for football refreshments that could be available to a food group. I will be talking to Maureen about that. The Bistro shouldn't be a problem everything was pre-packaged, they may want to bring in a refrigerator. Leslie College has not yet signed up for our weekend, but they may, so we are anticipating that one hallway is closed to us.

## Grants

Robert: We have not had a lot of requests in the past couple of years and we have not funded those that we have. It might be wise to note that the committee has been revived. Bill: did we overturn the grants moratorium? Can the secretary find out the status of that?

## Program

Linda: We are excited that we have a second introductory room.

We talked about the same thing in both rooms, but we have not done that except for intro to waltz. Plea to those of you who wish to communicate with performers, get me what I need: sales form, volunteers, membership; this information will be going out within the next month. We had approximately 50 new performers this year! So this information is critical. I need a publicity person to find about ads in the program book.

It was tempting to put intro dance in the new music room, but we wanted the intro stuff together. We are thinking of that as ritual dance in case in rain. That would be a good thing.

Harold: that could mean emptying a room and perhaps never using it. The concern is that there are valuable and large instruments. Linda: unfortunately the weather is unpredictable.

### Tickets

Don: Beth & I will be working on membership discount for advanced sales. We are periodically contacted by ticket sales companies. Some provide interesting services, but always the cost is higher. I have been following up with them. Nancy, Dan and I will be working on the refund policy. Robert: I assume that if I go on-line to buy a ticket they see a statement on how to become a member? Don: we had that last year and yes, we will have it again this year.

### Folk Bazaar

Angela: I start in January to contact people to see if I have spaces that need to be filled. We don't rock the boat.

### Parking

Bob: Dena Brody asked that we remind you that she needs a co-chair. This needs to be an active person who can oversee the remote lots. Ralph: would it help if we had a list of open positions in NEFFA News? "Please volunteer"

### Other Business

Dan: anything on the late night dance idea? Bob: I know of nothing specific. I did look at the YMCA recently. It is in Foxboro, less than 6 miles from the Festival site. Jay Barrows is a big Y person. It is a gorgeous building. It would make a great late night venue. Dan: do you think there is a chance we could get the Y for that? Bob: I am sure we would get a hearing. From there, I don't know.

Harold: normally I think Mansfield would shoot this down. This year because they have a week of time before them we could look into a late night dance in the middle school. And what would the cost be? Because of the schedule they might be open to it this year. They pull in custodians from other schools and Bob doesn't want them overworked. Linda: it's very late to consider this. We've passed tickets prices; we've made agreements with sound. We need someone to be a lead.

Beth: Dan would you be interested in this? Dan: I would be on a committee, but not do it by myself. Don: this is a difficult year anyway; perhaps this is too much this year.

Ralph: Would this have an impact on ticket prices? It is a consideration we would have to think about. Beth: the young board members are missing today. Dan: it would be very convenient to have it at the middle school. Linda: David Casserly was looking into this last year. Don: we mentioned this is time critical, is there stuff that would have to happen before next month? Linda: Michael Bergman & sound. Dan: there is a finite list of things involved in producing a dance, sound, venue, public safety. Linda: nothing that has to happen now.

**The NEFFA Festival!**  
**One Week Earlier Than Usual!**  
**April 15-17, 2011**



**N·E·F·F·A**

New England Folk Festival Association

PO Box 2789, Acton MA 01720

[www.neffa.org](http://www.neffa.org)

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
FRAMINGHAM, MA  
PERMIT No. 120